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Thence I proceed by easy stages to Birmingham, by Saturday night. I shall be free from all engagements by Thursday, and intend to get home the Tuesday or Wednesday night following. Pray God I may not be interrupted by illness. I am, dear Sir, with truest esteem, yours,

R. ROBINSON, miserably hoarse.

ORIGINAL LETTER OF THE LATE
W. HUNTINGTON.

Bristol, Nov. 16,—86.

*Rev'd Father in the Lord,—grace,
mercy & peace be with thee.*

If God permit and you approve I will honour your pulpit next Thursday evening—onour it I say—with the person of the vilest sinner that ever liv'd—and in possession of a hope that can never die. If you want to know my peddgree—I am by Birth a Beggar, by practice a devil, by trade a coal-hever, by profession—and possession a sinner saved, by principul a stiff decenter, and one of God's own making, for it was he alone that call'd, ordained me, & sent me out—and he has bin my bishop, my tuter, my provider and my defence ever since—else I had bin kill'd or starv'd long ago—If you or your people are fond of the origginal languages—of eloquence—oratory—or grammer, I am the man that can disapoint them all. But if apostolick ignorance will sute them—they will go nigh to gleen a few seraps of that sort—but my degrees will promis nothing further than that. But to inform my Rev'd Father a little about my irregularities—I am in my prayers very short—in my sermons short also—unless the master attends the feast. If so and the cruse gets a spring of oyl in it -- then I generally drop all thoughts of working by the day—nor can I give it up until I have emtied the whole content—tho' I know I shall

get no more without much knocking at mercies door. This I call liberal-ity—and am vain enough to think that it is furvant charity—and that charity which if aplyed covers a multitude of sins—and no wonder when we hold forth freely the blood and righteousness of him that cleansith from all the guilt of sin—and the robe that covers all the remains of sin. Rev'd father, God bless you—abundant happyness, comfort and sucksess attend bouth you and your family and your flock, while I remain, tho' unknown, affectionately yours,

WM. HUNTINGTON.

*The Rev'd Mr. Parsons,
Claverton Street, Bath.*

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

H. IN ANSWER TO X.*

H. ONCE more takes the liberty of saluting X., heartily wishing him a merry Christmas. The more he views the manly, ardent exertions of X. to thaw the political frigidity of the sleeping North, the more he admires, and from the bottom of his soul wishes him many returns of the season.

But as the goodness of man is imperfect, so is his knowledge. A calm observer will readily perceive, that X's knowledge of the Synod of Ulster resembles more the uncertain brilliancy of a wandering comet, than the steady radiance of a fixed star. That although he commences with the strength of Aries or Taurus, yet he is gradually shaded, and even eclipsed, as he verges through the more Southern signs.

Like other great minds, his is

* See Belfast Magazine for September, 1813, page 196.

open to conviction; and although philosophic pride may prevent an open avowal of former misconceptions, yet at length he seems willing to cast a shade over them; so that in his last, X. seems to have few points relative to the Synod to contend with H.

As X. is a connoisseur in painting, and even while he writes, directs his eye occasionally to favourite portraits, might H. advise him to glance sometimes at the statue of JUSTICE. He will see it painted blind, that the scales, unbiassed by external circumstances, may equi-ponderate. He does not see the deeds of our revered forefathers in the Church, in the same light that his laudable jealousy for civil and religious liberty leads him to view their successors in the Synod of Ulster.

He conceives that things are not now as they were of old: that the Church has lost the independence of former days: that the people have not been respected in the ecclesiastical decisions of modern times, as in the early days of the Reformation.

Hence it is, that when H. clearly demonstrates to X., that the Covenanters in the days of the venerable John Knox petitioned Mary Queen of Scots for Royal Bounty, that they enjoyed that bounty; that Mary divided their clergy into three classes; that she gave or withheld that bounty at her pleasure, (as plainly appears from the passages to which H. refers X., in John Knox's own history,) facts which X. can no longer deny; yet his pen, ready as the blade of Roderick Dhu, palliates these conclusive facts, that thereby he may tinge the Synod, and retain it in that dark shade in which his misconceptions had led him to place it.

H. is no friend to the modern system of tithes, but as X. seems to

think the first Reformers ought to have possessed a share of them, perhaps a glance at the portrait of Justice, moving him to view the living and the dead with an equal eye, might induce him to reason thus: "The predecessors of the Presbyterian clergy in Ulster *once* shared the tithes, as well as the Reformers in Scotland; the Defender of the Faith despoiled them of their dues; retained them, or bestowed them on his noble favourites. Why should they not sue for their hereditary right? Why not obtain an equivalent from the despoiler?"

Such reasoning in X. would be analogical, but perhaps not convenient.

X. seems still to labour under infidelity respecting the *independence* of the Synod: nor does he hesitate to assert, that the laity were *overlooked* in the late Bounty negotiation.

From this manner of reasoning, H. presumes X. is ignorant, that the original government Bounty plan, intended to keep the Synod in good order, proposed in 1800, was laid aside in 1803, on account of the determined opposition with which it met from the friends of religious liberty in the Synod. He presumes also, that X. does not know, (or at least the Proprietors of the Magazine, in their remarks on "Vindex," did not know,) that the "Presbyter's" three letters, published before the meeting of Synod in 1802, were directed against the Bounty plan of 1800, and not of 1803.

X. seems equally unacquainted with another important fact, that the warm debates in Synod during four successive meetings, as well as much of the conversation of the world and the Church, related not to the plan of 1803, but the rejected plan of 1800.

Although H. still laments the un-

equal distribution of Bounty, he is neither a warm advocate for Royal donations, nor a friend to avowedly intolerant and extirpating establishments; yet he asserts, in opposition to his friend X., that the clergy enjoy that Bounty on more independent terms than any of their predecessors did since the reign of Charles II.: also, that the laity had as great a share in the late negotiation for bounty, as the clergy. These facts I shall endeavour to demonstrate.

Late in the year 1799, or early in 1800, the agent of the Synod communicated to several of its members the intention of government to augment the Royal Bounty on terms different from those on which it had been formerly received. This news was not kept secret from the laity; it was talked of in every company; communicated to every congregation; brought through the usual committee of overtures into open Synod, and there warmly discussed by a numerous meeting of elders, as well as ministers; as X. will clearly perceive, if he take the trouble of consulting the Minutes of Synod for 1800. The "terms" of the grant were not accepted; a deputation of independent members, chosen by the popular party, were sent to expostulate with the government of the country, on the terms of the proposed grant. On the eighth of October, of the same year, an extraordinary meeting of elders, as well as ministers, was called, through the medium of the public newspapers, to receive the report of their deputation, and they also disapproved of the proposed plan.

In 1801, the Synodical Minutes will farther show, that the friends of religious liberty were not asleep, when their rights were in question. As a bar to ecclesiastical avarice,

they passed a law, declaring the full right of elders to vote on all questions of bounty; they, not less than the meeting of the preceding year, disapproved of the proposed bounty plan, at the same time enjoining every congregation to humble itself before God, on the last Wednesday of the following July, that the prayers of all Presbyterian Ulster might ascend together for direction on so important a subject!

In 1802, early in the year, three letters were printed, and circulated with much zeal, one of them particularly urging the attendance of elders at the ensuing meeting. No fewer than 89 did attend. To encourage the laity to take their full share in the deliberations relative to bounty, a law was enacted, extending the privilege of representation to all vacant congregations, as well as to those congregations where their ministers chose to remain at home. This law a majority in the Synod refused to rescind, notwithstanding an order to that effect from the then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

At the same Synod, a deputation of two elders, with three independent clergymen, were commissioned to explain to government the objections of the Synod, and to confer with them on the terms of the grant.

In 1803, the era of the present bounty plan, if X. will take the trouble to consult the Minutes of Synod, he will find, that elders from all vacant, as well as planted congregations, shared in the deliberations equally with the clergy, and voted freely on the proposed plan.

Considering the above authorities, H. hopes to hear no more from X., that lay elders were sent only to give a popular countenance to a treaty made by individual agents. No: the Genius of Liberty had diffused her independent spirit on a

majority of the Synod, and H. proudly recollects those virtuous struggles which excluded the money agent from that committee to which X. alludes, and hung over his head, notice of a motion to exclude him from office, lest he should privately interfere.

But did the articles of this treaty surrender the *independence* of the Church. as X. still insinuates, but cannot prove?

If X. would be kind enough to inform me, in what reign, or reigns, lived "the beloved disciple," the recollection of whom awakens, and I believe justly, so many endearing sensations in his mind, I would demonstrate to him, that *that* disciple, if bounty he enjoyed, held it on terms servile and dependent, compared with the articles of the late treaty. A treaty obtained not by Lord Castlereagh's kindness, but by the unremitting exertions of a virtuous majority in the Synod, who, in the struggle of several years, resisted the intended plan of 1800; and who, in 1803, obtained a grant of bounty on terms much more independent than their predecessors in that church.

In demonstration of these assertions, let it be remembered, that the ministers of the Presbyterian Church had enjoyed the tithes in the Stewart, and, in the place thereof, £100 per annum in the Cromwellian days. The first grant of Royal Bounty given by Charles II., in 1672, given as *secret service money*, to be bestowed on individuals, at the discretion of Sir Arthur Forbes, partially divided, excluding all who were not in the kingdom twelve years before, yet including the widows and children of such as were in it at that time, but since dead, held at the pleasure of the monarch, and even withdrawn before the end of his life.

The second grant was given by William and Mary, in 1690; the terms were *during pleasure*; and Queen Anne restricted this grant to such a list of persons, and to be divided in such shares as the Lord Lieutenant should approve of from year to year.

All the former grants in the Georges' days were given on the same precarious and dependent terms, *during pleasure*; to be distributed to such persons, and in such proportions, as the Chief Governor might approve.

But mark now the pre-eminence of the grant of 1803, in regard to liberality and independence. This grant is to the congregations of the Synod specified by name; confirmed by act of Parliament; not to be withdrawn from any minister whilst continued in office by his congregation; no interference with the rights of the people in the choice of their ministers; no interference in their Synodical meetings, their government, their discipline, and no *Veto* on their laws and elections.

Such are the terms which a persevering majority in the Synod, after four years hard struggle, obtained.

They dreaded personal dependence, and shrunk back at the thoughts of a precarious support, depending on the smiles of such an aristocracy, as consigned the virtuous ROBERT TENNENT to a fine of £50, and three months imprisonment, and that only for joggling the attention of his neighbour, by touching him on the arm! *They* would bear no such *Veto* on their laws and elections, as the friends of X., the Managers and Visitors of the Belfast Academical Institution ceded by their late Act of Incorporation to the Chief Governor, in prospect of gold, or a Royal gift. No; the Presbyterian minister, by

the articles of the late treaty, can lay claim to as much personal independence, as any subject of the realm, the Judges of the land not excepted.

On two points, it is true, H. had his fears as well as X. He disliked classification, or unequal distribution; and he dreaded indirect interference in the election of Presbyterian ministers. On these accounts, he offered to his people, to be *their stipendary alone*, if they chose to pay him his *accustomed support*. But, in the experience of ten years, no attempt at indirect interference has been made, even where elections have terminated contrary to the expressed wish of some of the first magistrates of the land.

Let X. then again review the grant of 1803, and he must see, that it interferes neither with the doctrine, the laws, the discipline, nor the rights of the people, in the election of their ministers.

If H. ever retaliates on X., it is with reluctance. He is perhaps as conscious of his inferiority to the intrepid Knox, as X. can paint him. Man is but relatively perfect, and even X. himself, though seen shining on various subjects, bright as the light of day, on the themes of civil and religious liberty, yet, as he is fond of the canine species, perhaps a good painter, in a night-piece, might not inaptly place him in the attitude of a faithful shepherd's dog, who, having performed his duty to his master in the day, sportively directs his attention to the queen of night in the evening; for surely the judicious reader will see, that X.'s attack on the Synod has had no stronger effect, than the dog Rover saying at the Moon.

H.

25th December, 1813.

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

GENTLEMEN,

IN passing through the town of Bangor a few days ago, I observed an expensive, but very useful improvement, making in the street leading to the Church, by which a very steep hill will be considerably lowered, and the road brought nigher to a level. This is a species of improvement very generally prevalent, and which is very creditable to the present age. In former times our ancestors appeared to pique themselves on carrying roads over hills; whether from motives of economy, conceiving roads to be easier kept in repair when taken over rocks, of which most hills are composed, or from an error in mathematical calculation, that the road is shorter to be taken over the hill than round the one side of it, we cannot form a probable conjecture; but their predilection for making roads over hills, in preference to through vallies, is evident in all the old roads in this country.

On a former occasion I furnished you with a few observations on an important improvement which was making, and which still continues to be made on the quay of Bangor. When these projected improvements are finished, they will, in the opinion of many experienced persons, render that port the most convenient on the coast, for the mails between Scotland and Ireland, to land, and be despatched from. Such improvements I have great pleasure in contemplating; and I am willing to render to the projectors and executors of such works a just meed of praise; but there are other improvements, which I must confess come much nearer my heart, and command my more entire approbation.